

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EURE-00 CU-02 VO-01 INR-05 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8884

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 4749

LIMDIS

EUR FOR GOOTT

DEPT PASS LABOR

ALSO FOR CU/UIPIV

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, CVIS, OEXC, FI (NYSTROM, EERO KALEVI)

SUBJECT: NORDIC METALWORKERS' TRIP OFF UNLESS DECISION TO

ISSUE WAIVER AND VISA TO FINN MADE THIS WEEK

REF: (A) OSLO 4716 (B) HELSINKI 2021

SUMMARY HODANN, PENTTILA AND TWO OTHERS CALLED ON
LABATT OCTOBER 22 TO CONFIRM NORDIC METAL WORKERS'
DECISION TO CANCEL OFFICIAL VISIT TO US UNLESS
FINNISH COMMUNIST NYSTROM GETS VISA TO PARTICIPATE.
THEY ASKED THAT THIS INFORMATION BE CONVEYED ASAP
TO BEN SHARMAN OF MACHINISTS, AS WELL AS TO UAW
AND STEELWORKERS. THEY EXPRESSED SURPRISE AND
DISMAY THAT OBJECTION TO INCLUSION OF ONE
LOW LEVEL COMMUNIST IN FINNISH DELEGATION HAD ARISEN
AT LAST MOMENT TO PREVENT TRIP THEY HAD SO LOOKED
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FORWARD TO. INFORMED THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN MADE

YET, THEY EXPRESSED HOPE DECISION TO ISSUE VISA
WOULD BE MADE THIS WEEK. OTHERWISE, THEY SAID, IT
WOULD BE TOO LATE TO MAKE TRIP. NORWEGIAN LO PHONED
OCTOBER 22 TO EXPRESS GRAVE CONCERN AND REQUEST
APPOINTMENT WITH AMBASSADOR TO DISCUSS CASE.
END SUMMARY

1. JAN HODANN, SECRETARY OF THE NORDIC METAL
WORKERS ORGANIZATION FROM SWEDEN, AND PRESIDENT
PENTTILA AND TWO OTHERS OF THE FINNISH METAL WORKERS
UNION CALLED ON LABATT LATE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON,
OCTOBER 22, JUST BEFORE LEAVING OSLO FOR HOME.
NORWEGIAN METAL WORKERS' PRESIDENT LEIF SKAU
REQUESTED THE APPOINTMENT ON THEIR BEHALF. THEY
INFORMED ALBATT OF UNANIMOUS DECISION TO CANCEL
THE NORDIC METAL WORKERS' DELEGATION'S VISIT TO
THE US EARLY IN NOVEMBER IF ONE OF ITS MEMBERS,
A FINNISH COMMUNIST, IS DENIED A VISA.

2. HODANN EXPRESSED CONSTERNATION AND SURPRISE
THAT ISSUE OF VISA TO FINNISH COMMUNIST HAD ARISEN
AT THE LAST MOMENT TO UPSET PLANS FOR NORDIC
METAL WORKERS DELEGATION VISIT TO US EARLY IN
NOVEMBER. HE EXPLAINED DELICATE UNOFFICIAL BALANCE
SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS MAINTAIN IN FINLAND,
SPLITTING OFFICES, DELEGATIONS, ETC., AND SAID HE
THOUGHT THAT WAS WELL UNDERSTOOD, INCLUDING BY
THE US TRADE UNIONISTS PARTICIPATING IN ORGANIZATION
OF VISIT. HE THOUGHT, HE SAID, THAT EVERYONE
HAD KNOWN ALL ALONG THAT THE FINNS WOULD HAVE A
COMMUNIST IN THE DELEGATION AND HE HAD UNDERSTOOD
THIS WOULD NOT CREATE A PROBLEM AND WAS QUITE
STUNNED TO FIND OUT ONLY AT THE LAST MINUTE THAT
IT WOULD. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT NYSTROM IS A
RELATIVELY MILD AND UNIMPORTANT COMMUNIST, AS
PER REF B, PGH 7. THE FINNS ENDORSED HODANN'S
STATEMENTS.

3. LABATT EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT HODANN'S AND THE
FINNS' SURPRISE, BRIEFLY EXPLAINED THAT COMMUNISTS
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ARE EXCLUDED UNDER US IMMIGRATION LAW UNLESS GRANTED
WAIVER AND SAID HE THOUGHT THIS AND PARTICULARLY
STRICT POLICY VIS-A-VIS COMMUNIST LABOR LEADERS
ARE WELL KNOWN. LABATT SAID VISA QUESTION HAD NOT
BEEN DECIDED YET BY USG AND HE DID NOT KNOW HOW IT
WOULD BE DECIDED, BUT SAID IT WOULD BE TOO BAD IF
WHOLE TRIP WERE CANCELLED AND ASKED WHY IT WOULDN'T
BE POSSIBLE TO GO AHEAD WITH THIS TRIP WITHOUT THE

MAN IN QUESTION AND RAISE ISSUE LATER. AFTER EXPLAINING FINNISH PROBLEMS AGAIN AND SAYING THE NORDIC SOLIDARITY DECISION WOULD NOT BE REVERSED, HODANN ASKED IF IT WOULDN'T BE IMPROPER TO LET AFL-CIO DECIDE WHO NORDICS SHOULD INCLUDE IN THEIR DELEGATIONS. LABATT SAID AFL-CIO WOULDN'T DECIDE VISA QUESTION, BUT WOULD CERTAINLY BE CONSULTED AND SUGGESTED THAT, AFTER ALL, IT WAS DECISION AS TO WHO SHOULD ENTER US FOR OFFICIAL VISIT TO US UNIONS. LABATT SUGGESTED THAT NORDIC GOVERNMENTS WOULD CERTAINLY CONSULT THEIR NATIONAL LABOR CENTERS (LOS) ON ANY QUESTION OF OFFICIAL TRADE UNION VISITS FROM SPAIN OR CHILE, FOR EXAMPLE.

4. BEFORE LEAVING, HODANN AND FINNS EMPASIZED THAT POSITIVE DECISION MUST COME THIS WEEK IF TRIP IS TO TAKE PLACE, BECAUSE GROUP WILL VISIT WEST GERMANY EN ROUTE. NEXT WEEK WOULD BE TOO LATE TO REINSTATE TRIP. THEY REPEATED THAT DECISION IS DEFINITE TO CANCEL VISIT UNLESS NYSTROM GETS VISA AND ASKED THAT SHARMAN OF MACHINISTS, STEELWORKERS AND UAW BE INFORMED IN AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HODANN HAD TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO PHONE SHARMAN.

5. NORWEGIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (LO) INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY SANDEGREN PHONED LABATT AT NOON TODAY (OCT 23), SAYING HE HAD JUST LEARNED OF SITUATION ON HIS RETURN FROM OUT OF TOWN TRIP, EXPRESSING HIS AND LO'S GRAVE CONCERN AT SERIOUSNESS OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL EFFECTS OF DENIAL OF VISA AND CANCELLATION OF TRIP WOULD HAVE IN LABOR MOVEMENT AND REQUESTING IMMEDIATE APPOINT-
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MENT WITH AMBASSADOR FOR METALWORKERS' PRESIDENT LEIF SKAU AND HIMSELF. TOLD THAT AMBASSADOR WAS IN COPENHAGEN AT NORDIC CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING, SANDEGREN SAID IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO SEE AMBASSADOR AS SOON AS HE CAME BACK TO EMPHSIZE GRAVITY WITH WHICH NORWEGIAN LO AND METALWORKERS VIEW SITUATION. TENTATIVE APPOINTMENT MADE FOR SKAU TO SEE AMBASSADOR OCTOBER 25. SANDEGREN ALSO SAID THIS PROBLEM CAME AS A SURPRISE SINCE PECULIAR FINNISH SITUATION WELL KNOWN AND HE BELIEVED SOME COMMUNIST LABOR LEADERS HAD OCCASIONALLY BEEN PERMITTED TO ENTER THE US IN SIMILARLY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE.
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